



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY



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MEMA OFFERS TIPS TO AS HURRICANE IRENE APPROACHES

FRAMINGHAM, MA – As Hurricane Irene approaches, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) recommends a number of steps people can take now to help minimize potential damage from the damaging winds and torrential rains.

“Early planning and preparation can be the key to your safety,” states MEMA Director Kurt Schwartz. “It is important to use your time wisely and not wait until the last minute.”

Here are some examples of steps you should be taking:

- Trim back trees and shrubbery around your home. Remove diseased or damaged tree limbs that could be blown down, causing damage, during a storm.
- Clear clogged rain gutters. Hurricanes/tropical storms often bring torrential rain. Providing clear drainage will help prevent misdirected flooding.
- Bring in outdoor items to bring inside such as lawn furniture, trash barrels, hanging plants, toys and awnings that can be broken or picked up by strong winds and used as a missile.
- Make sure storage sheds, children’s playhouses or other outbuildings are securely anchored, either to a permanent foundation or with straps and ground anchors.
- Elevate articles in your basement that could be damaged from even minor flooding.
- Make temporary plywood covers to protect windows and sliding doors. Drill holes for screws or lag bolts in each cover and around each window. Note: Taping of windows does not prevent them from breaking.
- Keep your vehicles fully fuelled.
- Have a certain amount of cash available. If power is lost, ATMs may not be working.
- Make a record of your personal property. Keep an itemized list of your furniture, clothing and valuables to assist adjusters in case of a claim. Back it up with photographs or video.
- Protect your insurance policies and other important documents in a secure place like a safe deposit box or a watertight box. Many people back up important documents online.

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- Learn where gas pilots and water mains are located and how to safely shut off all utilities.
- Lock doors and windows to ensure that they are closed tight to help protect against strong winds and rain.

Have a Kit

Every home and business should have a stocked basic emergency supply kit that could be used for any emergency, in the event you are isolated for three to five days without power. Each kit will be unique to each family, but should include a portable radio, flashlight, extra batteries, a supply of non-perishable foods, along with bottled water, a first aid kit, extra prescription medication, and extra food and supplies for infants and pets.

Make a Plan

Develop a Family Emergency Communications Plan in case family members are separated from one another during the storm. This plan should also address reunification after the immediate crisis passes. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the Family Emergency Communications Plan contact person. During and immediately after a disaster occurs, it is often easier to access a long distance telephone number than a local one. Also, calling outside a disaster area is usually easier than calling into the same area.

Be Informed

You should contact your local Emergency Management Director to familiarize yourself with your Community's Emergency Plans, particularly potential evacuation routes and shelter locations before an emergency situation occurs.”

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is the state agency responsible for coordinating federal, state, local, voluntary and private resources during emergencies and disasters in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MEMA provides leadership to: develop plans for effective response to all hazards, disasters or threats; train emergency personnel to protect the public; provide information to the citizenry; and assist individuals, families, businesses and communities to mitigate against, prepare for, and respond to and recover from emergencies, both natural and man made. For additional information about MEMA and Hurricane Preparedness, go to www.mass.gov/mema. Follow MEMA updates on *Facebook* and *Twitter*.

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